The Master Plan

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Summary: Mufasa and Sarabi unveil their ultimate plan, wreaking havoc across the Pride Lands. Only Simba and his friends—and even some enemies—can help.

Chapter 1: Chapter 1: The Plan

AN: This is it. The final story of Series Four. Now, you've all been wondering what's been up with Mufasa and Sarabi, haven't you? Well, I think it's about time that you found out.

The Master Plan

Chapter One: The Plan

The Plan.

It was a good plan. Their plan. The best plan. A *very* good plan and they knew it. None could ever hope to contend with it. To do so would be to commit suicide. Any who attempted to imitate or copy would be destroyed. Annihilated.

There were only them. Them and their plan.

And none would get in their way.

"This is good, isn't it?" Shocker grinned, as he looked at the Interceptor. "I mean, this is *really* good. The best plan I've ever had. No one is ever gonna be able to compete with this. Nobody."

"I fail to see the brilliance," said the Interceptor, looking visibly unimpressed. "I mean, it's just stupid, isn't it?"

"Stupid?" Shocker looked incredibly offended. "You're lucky that I don't shock you back to last year!"

"I wish it *was* last year," said the Interceptor. "After all, at least then I wouldn't be in this mess. Beaten by cubs and partnered with the biggest psycho this side of the earth."

"What did you call me?" Shocker asked angrily. His paws crackled with his trademark electricity.

The Interceptor rolled his eyes. He was used to Shocker's antics by now. It was highly unlikely that this cub—powerful, though he was—would ever attempt to kill him. Like it or not, the Interceptor knew that he was necessary to Shocker's continued survival. Without him, he would just mope around for the rest of his eternal life.

"I called you the biggest psycho this side of the earth," the Interceptor said. "Sorry for speaking my mind. I'm serious, though—this plan is terrible."

"What's so wrong about it?" Shocker asked, turning and gesturing with a paw to his 'greatest plan yet'.

It was nothing more than a large rock dangling from a vine on a tree, hovering a few feet above the ground. It looked like the most awful trap ever to be conceived. Although Shocker, of course, failed to notice this.

"It's simple," Shocker explained, walking over to the tree. "Those stupid cubs rush by. We hide up in the tree, and wait for them to walk right underneath the rock. Then, using my powers, we zap the vine, and watch the rock crush the three of them to dust!" He laughed evilly. "Isn't it just so *evil*?"

"No," came the simple reply. "It's dumb."

"I'm beginning to get annoyed by your tone," Shocker snarled. "Just because something is easy doesn't mean it's stupid."

"It's not because it's easy," the Interceptor told him. "It's because it *won't work*. Don't you get it? *I! Don't! Like! It!*"

"As you keep saying," retorted Shocker. "Now, shut up and help me kill those little brats."

"You're a little brat yourself," the Interceptor muttered under his breath.

"I heard that," Shocker snapped.

"You were supposed to!" the Interceptor yelled. He sighed. "I give up on this nonsense. You're never ever going to kill them! Just deal with it!"

Shocker tugged at the vine that suspended the rock, pulling it taut and making sure it was secure. "For your information, I *will* kill them," he said, "and I'm going to laugh very hard in your face when I succeed."

"That'll be the day," laughed the Interceptor. "What even makes you think they're going to come here in the first place?"

Shocker frowned. "I never thought about that."

The Interceptor grinned, having proved his point. "*Exactly*. See? You're useless. Completely and utterly usele—"

Shocker clamped a paw over the Interceptor's mouth. "Hold that thought," he interrupted, before running off in a random direction.

Bemused, the Interceptor watched as Shocker made his swift departure. "Where on earth is he going…?"

"Wow." Tama stared straight ahead, looking more miserable than a dying elephant. "This is boring."

"Yeah," Tojo agreed, sitting on the ground, facing his 'wife'. Although he'd never agreed to marriage, of course. But then Tama had a very forceful way of making one do things. "It's so boring that… well, my mind has just stopped."

"We could pretend we have imaginary friends," Tama suggested. "And then kill them. That'd be fun."

"Yeah. Although I doubt my mind would be able to process the excitement," he said flatly.

Tama groaned in despair, tugging at the fir on her head. "This is hopeless," she complained. "After that strange incident which I can't remember, my mind just seems to be totally blank! I can't think of anything!"

"I wondered where you disappeared to that day," Tojo told her. "Where'd you go?"

Tama shrugged. "I don't know. It's like that part has been… erased from my memory, if you get what I mean."

Tojo narrowed his eyes in realisation. "Have you got amnesia?"

"No, it's just the way my fur sticks up."

He sighed. "I mean memory loss."

"Oh. Well, yeah, it's all gone. Specifically where I went, I mean," she explained. "Must have been something important—especially if a goddess like me wasn't allowed to know."

"A goddess?" Tojo almost choked on his own laughter. "I think goddesses take baths more often, Tama."

"Hey, I have my annual bath every year," Tama argued. "That's more than enough, in my opinion."

"Then your opinion is wrong," Tojo said bluntly.

"I don't like your tone, Tojo," Tama said. "It's like you're trying to upset me."

"You got that right."

Tama's eyes widened. "How can you be so cruel?"

"I'm bored," Tojo told her. "Animals do crazy things when they're bored. Like… you know…"

Tama just stared at him, confused. "What?"

"You know… doing what you do when the sun goes down," Tojo replied.

"What, sleep?" Tama asked.

Tojo shook his head. "No—the other thing."

"Ah. *Breathing*. I get ya. I don't know how that's supposed to help with boredom, though," Tama said, befuddled by the conversation.

Tojo shuffled closer to Tama. "Tama… didn't your parents teach you anything about the 'birds and the bees'?"

"Oh, yeah," Tama said confidently. "Totally. There're all kinds of different birds and bees. Like—"

"No, no, no," Tojo interrupted. "You're getting this all wrong. Look, how do you think we're supposed to make a family

when we're older?" Tama had often spoken of having cubs of her own some day.

"Tojo, it's very simple," Tama assured him. "We use the Stork Delivery Service. They'll give us a few cubs in no time."

Tojo looked astounded. "The continued existence of my bloodline is doomed."

"Look, Tojo, if you have a problem with starting a family, then I suggest that—" Tama was interrupted when someone grabbed her by the throat.

She stared into the glaring eyes of Shocker.

"Hey, you're the guy who—" Tama choked as Shocker tightened his grip around her neck.

"Oh, no—another nasty cub," Tojo sighed, devoid of emotion. "Man, my life is dull."

"You're coming with me," Shocker told her, "and there's nothing that you can do about it."

"But I—"

Shocker zapped her in the head with a quick stream of electricity, and Tama's head lolled backwards. She was completely unconscious.

"And as for you," said Shocker, staring at Tojo. "You're in for the ride of your life."

He hit Tojo with a few arcs of electricity. He bounced across the ground, landing on his stomach. His expression of utter boredom still hadn't changed.

"Oh, no," he said blankly. "The pain."

"That takes care of that," Shocker said, placing Tama gently on his back and then walking away with her.

At least now he had a way to make his plan work.

"What was it you said about knowing how they're going to walk by this tree?" Shocker teased, as he strode past the Interceptor with Tama on his back.

"Why have you got her?" the Interceptor asked, pointing to Tama with a claw. "I thought you erased her memory already."

"I did," Shocker said. "But now I need her for something else."

"And what would that be?" asked the Interceptor.

"Well, I'm going to brainwash her into bringing the cubs right to us," Shocker explained. "They won't be able to tell that she's completely under my control."

"Somehow, I doubt that," said the Interceptor. "I'm sure—as we've learned in the past—that they're much smarter than we think. Ever heard of a term called 'underestimation'?"

"Shut your mouth," Shocker snapped. "I've had enough of your babbling already."

The Interceptor gave him a look of pure venom as he set Tama on the ground. "I'm going to kill you one day…"

Chapter 2: Chapter 2: A Heated Encounter

Chapter Two: A Heated Encounter

"You know, this is weird," Simba said, panting as the intense heat engulfed his body. "Out of all the ways we could die, I never for a second thought it would end up like this."

Nala scowled. "You're telling me."

"This is humiliating," Haiba sighed.

The three cubs had been secured together by vines, and were dangling from their legs as they were slowly lowered into the top of a bubbling volcano. Stood at the edge were a few lionesses that were in control of the vines.

"This serves you right," snarled one of them.

"Yeah," said another. "You posers."

Simba rolled his eyes. "How many times am I gonna hear that word this week? I don't get it. What did we even do?"

"I believe I may be able to shed some light on this," Haiba said, frowning. "Well, you see, I did once pose as a master criminal called Don Haiba and—"

"Oh, *please* don't remind me about that," Nala moaned, having experienced his 'Don Haiba' persona herself. It wasn't pleasant. "It was horrible."

"As I was saying," Haiba said, "I believe that these lionesses were the ones who took me in at Jowai Resort, believing me to be the *real* Don Haiba."

"Who's Don Haiba?" Simba asked.

"It's a long story," Nala said. "And from the looks of things, we only have about forty-seven seconds to live, so I don't enough time."

"To cut a long story short: they know I'm a liar now," Haiba said. "I *knew* we shouldn't have wandered into their territory."

"So their idea of punishment is to dip us into a flaming volcano?" Nala asked. "That's… disturbing. I think we should skip over this story when we tell it to our cubs."

"If we live through this," Simba retorted. "And from the looks of things, I'd say that death is pretty much imminent."

"That's a big word for you," Nala teased.

"This isn't really the time, Nala," Simba admonished her. "We only have, like, seventeen seconds left."

"I have an idea!" Haiba proclaimed, a grin on his face.

"Really?" Simba and Nala asked excitedly.

"Yeah," Haiba said. His face then fell. "But I just forgot it."

Simba and Nala groaned.

The lionesses continued to lower them towards the fiery death that was the top of the volcano. The smoke from the searing lava inside was more than enough to make them feel that they had been set alight already.

"I've just decided," Simba said. "I hate volcanos."

"Well, this is it," Nala said. "We're going to die. I guess all I can say is: Simba, I love you. And Haiba?"

"Yes, Nala?" Haiba asked, hoping to hear those three little words from Nala.

"I hate you."

"Ah." Haiba smiled. "Not the three words I was hoping for, then."

As the lava was mere inches from disintegrating them into nothingness, the three cubs suddenly discovered that their descent had stopped.

"Huh?" Simba's eyes snapped open, and he looked upwards—even though it made him rather dizzy to do so—to find the lionesses glaring daggers down at him.

"Any last words before your execution, posers?" asked one of the lionesses.

"Yes! Yes!" Haiba cried in desperation. "You've got it all wrong! I'm the real Don Haiba! Whichever one you've seen is just another copycat! *He's* the poser! Not me!"

"I find that hard to believe," a lioness said.

"No, it's true!" Haiba insisted. "You have to believe us! I'm Don Haiba, and these are my closest friends! Don, um… Abmis and Don Alan."

"*Don Alan?*" Nala exclaimed in outrage. "*Don Alan?*"

"Just go with it," Haiba hissed. "Please! You have to listen to us! Or else the Great King of the Past will be *very* unhappy to hear that you've killed one of their best friends."

The lionesses exchanged confused glances with one another. "You know the Great King of the Past?"

"Oh, yes," Haiba said, nodding. "Don't we, guys?"

Simba and Nala nodded insistently. "Oh, yeah. Great guys," Simba mumbled.

"Yeah. They're really… *dead*," Nala complimented.

"But your voice is different," one of the lionesses pointed out, staring at Haiba with a puzzled expression on her face.

"Um…" Haiba cleared his throat. "*Yo!* Let us outta here! *Yo!*"

"'Yo'?" said Simba, narrowing his eyes.

"This is so embarrassing," Nala said, grimacing.

The lioness nodded at her friends. "Oh, yes. He's the real Don Haiba, all right. I think we'd better let them go."

"Yes, I suppose so," another agreed. "Raise them up."

Simba, Nala and Haiba let out deep sighs as they began to rise up and away from the searing volcano.

"Now *that*," Simba said, "was a close one."

Meanwhile, far away from the quaint area of Jowai Resort, King Mufasa and Queen Sarabi observed their kingdom from the tip of Pride Rock.

Silently, they turned to look at each other.

Their eyes turned a sickly jet black.

"*It is time*," they both spoke in perfect unison.

Simba, Nala and Haiba all hugged each other tightly once they were a safe distance away from the volcano.

"Oh, I don't think I've ever been so scared in my life!" Haiba exclaimed. "It's the perfect time for a group hug—especially considering I have active crushes on both of you right now."

"That's enough hugging," Simba declared upon hearing that, taking several steps away from Haiba.

"Come on, Simba," Haiba chuckled. "Live a little. I don't bite."

"That's what I'm afraid of," Simba replied. "Anyway, we'd better get back to the Pride Lands—before my parents start worrying about me."

"Uh, Simba?" Nala piped up. "Didn't you forget? They, uh…?"

Simba's shoulders sagged, and his stomach fell. "Oh, yeah," he said, feeling a sudden bout of depression. "I forgot…"

Of course. Simba's parents were completely unresponsive to him—or anyone else, for that matter—now. They just seemed to stare straight ahead whenever he saw them. They only ever moved when they wanted to give each other these incredibly unsettling stares. There was something wrong with them, and it was getting worse with each passing day. Actually, scratch that—each passing *minute*.

At first, it was probably something of a blessing. Simba's parents always used to get on his nerves. They never wanted him to do anything that might be 'rowdy' or 'unsafe'. Even hanging around with Nala seemed to be a cause for a concern when they first became friends.

However, they did eventually warm to his adventurous nature, and simply had to admit that he was never ever going to change. Or they were certainly coming to understanding it. Either way, Simba didn't really mind.

But then they just became so uncaring. Not about him, not about the kingdom; nothing. They only ever seemed to care about themselves—and Simba just didn't know why. It wasn't like they were being controlled or something. If it was that, then it was mind control on a level that he'd never ever seen before. Honestly, it terrified him. He'd never really thought about it before, but one of his biggest fears would be to lose his parents.

But he would never tell anyone that.

"Anyway…" Simba turned round, a chirpy smile on his face. "We'd better get back."

"Uh, Simba?" Nala called. "You sure you're all right?"

"Yeah," he replied, a little quicker than he would have. "Why wouldn't I be? Come on. Let's go!"

He hurried off. Nala and Haiba exchanged a puzzled glance with each other before following. "Why are you in such a hurry, anyway?" Haiba asked.

"I'm not," Simba insisted. "It's just… well, we don't have anything else to do, do we?"

"We could have stayed at the resort," Haiba suggested. "I'm sure the lionesses would have been more than happy to accommodate us. After all, I am their best customer."

"No—they *think* you're their best customer," Nala retorted. "Why couldn't you just pay for membership yourself? You are a prince, aren't you?"

"My assets have been frozen," Haiba replied. "Until I come of age, at least."

"How do you even pay them?" Simba questioned.

"With food," Haiba said. "Although it usually ends up with them serving it to you, anyway. It's a very poor way to run a business—even if it is the best luxury wildebeest can buy."

"Well, we're not going there anymore," Nala decided. "I don't know about you, but I don't want to get dumped into any more volcanoes."

Haiba smiled bashfully. "Not even just a *small* one—?"

"No!"

AN: Well, that was fun to write. I don't know why the heck I decided to throw a volcano into the beginning of this story. It's one of those silly random things that just pops into your head.

I guess your curiosity about the corrupted Mufasa and Sarabi is reaching its boiling point now, right? Feel free to tell me of your agony in a review. After all, feedback is what a writer like me lives for. See you soon.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Massacre

AN: Two more chapters of this thrilling finale. You might finally get some clues on Mufasa and Sarabi here. What's happened to then? I know now I'm just teasing you with that question. Never fear, though; all shall be revealed soon.

Haradion: A good anagram can never fail. It's just coincidence that Nala's name is Alan backwards. These jokes write themselves. I just have to type.

kora22: The clue is always in the eyes. *Always*.

Greg M 94: Simba, Nala and Haiba love each other very much. It's just that they get each other into a lot of trouble. Friendships are like that.

LionKingFactsGuy2: I've always wanted to bring the Jowai Resort lionesses back at some point. I guess that little scene with the volcano was an opportune moment to stick them in the story.

the-mysterious-other: I love random things. Especially volcanoes.

BLACK CAT: You're a big fan of my stories? I'm not. They suck. Nah, I'm just kidding. It's great to hear you like them, though. I always appreciate such feedback.

IthilienRanger: You were only on Series Two when *Clone Wars* came out? You must catch up fast. Yeah—it does take a while to read all fifty-one stories if you're just starting out. I guess that's always the problem with a series like this.

anonymous13: Happy New Year to you, too! I wanted some comedy in these first two chapters, because things get pretty bleak from here on in. There will still be some humour, though.

Guest: You're right. Tama did tell Tojo where babies come from in *Tama's Bet*. I guess that memory-scrambling blast from Shocker in *Clone Wars* must have made her forget.

Chapter Three: Massacre

It was rare that Sarafina ever feared the King or Queen. In fact, it was *extremely* rare. The only time she could ever think of fearing King Mufasa had been when she first came into the kingdom with Nala. It was such a long time ago that she forgot how intimidating he could be.

She wouldn't forget anymore.

There he was, stood direct centre underneath the den entrance. Stuck in the same posture. The sort of posture that a lunatic affects when staring down its victim.

King Mufasa looked like a lunatic right now.

And his eyes were black.

That was what Sarafina was terrified by. Those *eyes*. She could feel them burning right through her body. Into her soul. It didn't take her long to figure out that she had been right all along.

Mufasa—and Sarabi, for that matter—weren't who they once were.

This had confirmed it. She'd had her suspicions for quite some time now. After all, it seemed that with each passing day they lost more and more of their personalities. Like their life was being drained away with each passing second. To have that happen to someone was a chilling idea.

Sarafina couldn't help it. She stared back at Mufasa. He wasn't doing anything. Just staring at her. It seemed as if he were trying to destroy her just by using the power of sight. But surely that wasn't possible. It just sounded silly.

But then a lot of strange things happened in the Pride Lands. Sarafina had noticed that right from the beginning. Ever since she arrived. Weird things happened here. Terrible things. And yet, she still couldn't figure out what it meant.

Maybe the answers were about to reveal themselves.

"Who are you?" Sarafina spoke. It was clear that this was no longer Mufasa she was speaking with. She had no idea who—or *what*—he had become. "And… what do you want?"

Mufasa's eyes seemed to turn an even deeper, darker shade of black. "*We want,*" he spoke, in a distorted voice, "*your ground.*"

Sarafina's eyes narrowed with curiosity. She tried to hide her fear. Whatever was inside him, it was surely a monster. "What do you mean?"

"*We want,*" he—or *it*—said, "*your life.*"

"What does that mean?" Sarafina questioned, increasing the volume of her voice. She had to be brave. She couldn't allow it to know that she was scared. If it found out, then she was surely—

"*You… are… afraid,*" said the voice, as if searching for the right words. "*Terrified. Frightened. Scared. Fearful. Anxious. Troubled. Petrified. Not brave.*"

Sarafina's resolve dropped. It knew. But… *how* could it know? It would have to be able to see into her thoughts. It would have to be able to read her mind. But that just wasn't possible! It wasn't!

"*I can see… through you,*" 'Mufasa' said. "*Everything that you… think. Or have thought. You cannot… hide. To do so is to… seal… your… fate.*"

He's going to kill you, Sarafina realised, as a chill swept through her bones. She instantly thought of Nala. Her daughter. Her only cub. What would she do without her mother? She would have no family. No relation at all. How would she cope?

You have to kill him. The thought suddenly shot into her head. It was the instinct for survival, she supposed. She didn't want to die. Not yet. Despite all the tragedy that he befallen her in her life. She didn't think anyone wanted to die. Not *really*.

"Yeah…" Sarafina muttered, silently unsheathing her claws. "Fate…" *Right in the throat,* she thought. She'd hunted with the pride for long enough. She knew exactly how to kill another animal. It was simple. Easy. She could bite his throat out and kill him in a matter of seconds.

"*You will all… expire,*" it told her. "*You… will… perish.*"

Sarafina let out an almighty roar—the loudest she could possibly perform—and lashed out at the thing which had taken over Mufasa. She tackled him to the ground, opening her jaw wide and biting down on his throat. She tore away at his flesh, desperate to kill whatever was inside. She couldn't allow it to live. It would kill her. Not just that—it would kill *everyone*.

Mufasa—or the thing inside him—retaliated, batting her away with a paw in one simple movement.

Sarafina gasped as she slid and bounced across the ground, rolling out of the den and landing hard on her stomach. *But how—?* It was strength on a level she'd never seen before. As if he had the strength of ten—maybe twenty—lions!

Bleeding profusely from the neck, the thing inside Mufasa glared at her with intense anger. "*Die,*" it snarled. "*Die—die—die—die—die—die—die…*"

Run. One word. That was all it took for Sarafina to leap to her paws and run away, before that *thing* had a chance to react. She didn't look back. She couldn't bear to. Whatever this was, it was something that she couldn't kill. *No one* could.

As she disappeared into wherever—she didn't know where she was going—the thing inside King Mufasa watched her, unmoving.

"*You will not live,*" it said. "*No one will…*"

Sarabi joined her mate by his side. "*She escaped?*"

"*Just the one,*" said Mufasa.

"*And the rest?*" asked Sarabi.

"*They have… expired,*" Mufasa replied. "*The pride is… extinct.*"

They smiled at each other, looking over the edge of Pride Rock and staring down at their kingdom.

There were bodies littered all over it.

"Okay, so we put her here," Shocker said, dumping Tama on the ground. She was still unconscious. "Then when she wakes up, I take over her mind using my powers."

"You can do that with electricity?" questioned the Interceptor, arching an eyebrow.

"I can do anything," Shocker replied. "And if I were you, then I'd stop complaining about—"

The Interceptor watched with confusion as Shocker's face fell in an expression that he had never seen before.

Fear.

"What are you staring at?" he asked, confused.

Shocker didn't say anything. He merely raised a claw, pointing at something behind the Interceptor.

The Interceptor whipped round, and his reaction was more or less the same as Shocker's.

There were bodies littering the ground. Dead, rotting carcasses. Of zebras, wildebeests, and lionesses.

Lionesses. The lionesses of the Pride Lands. Covered in blood. In bits and pieces. Legs missing. Eyes gouged out. Organs torn away.

"What's going on?" the Interceptor demanded, looking back at Shocker, visibly horrified. "Huh?"

"I… I don't know," Shocker replied, looking haunted, for once in his life. "I didn't see them before. It's like someone's… destroyed the whole pride. They've killed everything. Everyone."

"How?" the Interceptor asked, unable to comprehend what he was seeing. He'd seen death before—but this was on a scale that he couldn't dream of. This was just *overkill*. Too much for the most evil of lions to handle.

"Something's very wrong here," Shocker said. "I can feel it."

"Yeah, well, thanks for that," the Interceptor mumbled. "Like I couldn't tell before. Who the hell killed everyone?"

"How would I know?" Shocker shrugged. "I've never seen anything like it before. Even *I* wouldn't do something like this."

"Yeah—'cause you couldn't," said the Interceptor. "Now, let's get out of here—before the killer decides *we're* not worth keeping alive either."

"For once, I think I'll agree with you," said Shocker, before slowly walking away, checking to make sure that no one was watching from nearby.

Mufasa sniffed the air. "*I sense more lives,*" he said. "*They will have to be removed also.*"

"*Everyone,*" Sarabi agreed. "*Anyone and everyone. There can be no more entities corrupting our operation. This has to be…* perfect."

"*Indeed,*" said Mufasa. "*Any potential threats will be exterminated into a bloody mess.*"

They both looked at each other, and let out a horrible, gurgling laugh that could chill the blood of the most fearsome lions.

Chapter 4: Chapter 4: Total Destruction

Chapter Four: Total Destruction

Zazu had seen a great many deal of things in his short life: savage monsters, psychopathic lions and torturous monkeys to name but a few. However, merciless massacre wasn't on his list—and he never expected it to be.

The Pride Lands were his home. They always had been, and they always would be—no matter whether he was welcome there or not. King Mufasa and Queen Sarabi—no matter how much they stressed that he was banished from the kingdom—would never be able to take away that.

It pained him—broke his heart—to see that his home had been destroyed.

Or at least it *seemed* like it had been destroyed.

The very first thing he noticed—on his routine trip to try and scavenge something to eat for dinner—was that there were hundreds upon hundreds of bodies on the ground. Of many different animals. Birds, lionesses, wildebeest; you name it. They were all strewn across the ground like pathetic scraps of dirt that nobody wanted. It looked horrible. It smelled horrible. Hell, it even *tasted* horrible. Zazu could have sworn he could practically taste the death in his mouth—if such a thing were possible. It was the most awful spectacle he had ever witnesses in his life.

"Oh, my…"

Zazu couldn't believe what he was seeing. Every single life in the Pride Lands—every single thing—had been destroyed. Killed in an instant, by… Well, Zazu just didn't know. He had no idea as to what kind of culprit—what *monster*—could cause such a thing. It was a massacre. A bloody massacre that could serve no real purpose.

Unless the purpose was that of just being psychotic.

Zazu stood there, transfixed, perched on top of the tree branch just beside the waterhole. He turned his head in order to stare down at the water.

Half of it had turned red, tainted with blood. He could see the body of a cub lying just over the water's edge, gore spilling from his brain where a fatal strike had met its mark.

It made him sick.

And all the while—all the time he was viewing this destruction—he couldn't help but think of Simba and Nala.

He hoped they were okay.

"You know, I think that we should hold off on going into the jungle for a while," Haiba said as he, Simba and Nala traipsed across the Pride Lands. "Too many bad things happen around there."

"Bad things can happen *here* too, you know," Nala reminded him. "There could practically have been an entire massacre, for all I—"

"*Nala!*"

Nala's head shot up at the sound of her mother screaming her name. "Mom?"

Sarafina sprinted towards her daughter. Parts of her fur were matted with deep patches of blood. She looked terrified, and Nala could tell. Something was very, very wrong.

"*Nala!*" She collapsed to the ground in front of her daughter, panting with a sickening mixture of both fear and exhaustion. "You're alive…"

Simba and Haiba shot each other unsure glances, and shrugged at each other, unsure what to make of this.

"Mom…" Nala was just as confused as they were. "What's going on?"

Tears streamed down Sarafina's cheeks. "*They've killed them! They're all dead! They've killed everyone in the Pride Lands!*" she sobbed, sadness leaking out of her with each word she screamed.

Simba, Nala and Haiba all froze. Time seemed to stop. Those thirteen words were enough to shake the three cubs right to the bone. It was impossible. The death of everyone in the Pride Lands was just ridiculous. It couldn't be true. It just couldn't be. She was lying—or this was just some kind of sick joke.

"What do you mean?" Simba asked, taking a step towards the horrified Sarafina. She was inconsolable.

"*What do you think I mean, you idiot?*" Sarafina snapped, her eyes raw from crying. "*Everyone's dead! Your damn mother and father killed everyone! They've destroyed the only place I've ever been able to call home!*" She pointed an accusing claw at Simba. "This is all your fault. *Do you hear me? It's all your fault! You little runt!*"

Simba could only stare at Sarafina, horrified beyond belief.

"Hey, Zorry!" Pori's voice sounded distant to Zazu. "I've been looking for you! I was beginning to get worried that you were eaten by a hyena or something!" She perched herself on the branch right next to her. "Why are you looking so glum?"

Zazu didn't say anything. He was shaking with terror. The most he could manage to was to merely gesture with a wing to the destruction in front of them both.

Pori's eyes widened at the sight of the devastation splayed out across the Pride Lands. The sheer volume of the dead bodies was enough to make her sick to the stomach. How could anyone do such an awful thing?

"It's… awful," Zazu said, struggling to make out the words. His legs felt so weak and frail. He could barely open his beak to form a sentence. "Everyone… has just… *died*. The whole kingdom…" It was too much death for his mind to comprehend. This was worse than when that horrific entity known as Death had taken over...

Pori's gaze hardened. "Who did this, Zazu?" she asked.

Zazu just stared at her, astounded. "You used my name," he said.

"Of course I did, stupid," she snapped. "Now who did this? I know that you know."

Zazu couldn't believe what he was hearing. How was she speaking like this? Had the disaster overloaded his brain? Was he just imagining this? "Pori… if I had *any* idea as to who—"

"It's much worse than I thought," Pori said, shaking her head.

"Wait, Pori, I don't quite understand—"

"Well, of course you wouldn't understand," Pori interrupted, much to Zazu's amazement. "You're not exactly the type of bird who sticks his beak in places he's not supposed to. Not like me, of course. No—I'm much different."

It was then that Zazu came to the conclusion that Pori wasn't exactly the hornbill she was claiming to be when he'd first met her. "Pori… who are you?"

"Who do you think I am?" she retorted. "My name *is* Pori. It's not like I changed it or anything."

"Then why did you act so… unintelligent before?" he asked, still straining to understand how she had completely flipped her personality.

"It's my cover," she explained. "I've been working for the Parasitic Oppression Group for almost two years now."

"POG?" Zazu asked in bemusement. "I've never heard of such an organisation."

"You're not supposed to," Pori explained. "It's secretive. But I've been working undercover—ever since I met you—to investigate this parasite that I believe has been residing in the Pride Lands for almost an entire year."

"An entire year?" Zazu said in disbelief. "So you've just been… fooling me this whole time just so you could investigate a 'parasite'? I don't even know what such an outlandish thing is supposed to mean!"

"Could you be any more ridiculous?" Pori asked. "Zazu, surely you've heard of a parasite, haven't you?"

"I suppose," Zazu replied. "I hear that they're infectious."

"Exactly!" Pori exclaimed. "That's what the Parasitic Oppression Group is against, you know! Stopping parasites from spreading. Why do you think the Kulaani illness isn't ravaging the entire savannah right now? That was us. We're good at

cleaning stuff up."

"You could have just told me," Zazu said, folding his wings, feeling rather betrayed by Pori. "I could have helped you."

"Sorry, but I like to keep things private," Pori said. "And I couldn't risk you blowing my cover."

"Blowing your cover?" Zazu exclaimed. "I would never betray one of my own friends! Why, even the King—"

"The King is the very animal I believe that the parasite has infested itself in," Pori explained to him. "The Queen, too—probably. And I'm too late to stop it from killing this entire kingdom."

"So this… this parasite is responsible for this horrible display of death and destruction before us, then?" Zazu presumed, gesturing with a wing to the dead corpses on the ground. "Is that what you're trying to say?"

"Yes," Pori said. "And I need your help to stop it. Before…" She trailed off.

"Before what?" Zazu asked, afraid of the answer.

"Before it kills the entire world."

AN: Shocked? You should be. So it turns out that Pori wasn't so stupid as she made herself out to be all along. Every life in the Pride Lands has been exterminated. And some sort of parasite has instigated itself in the King and Queen. But what kind of parasite could it be? Well, if you're clever, then you just might be able to figure it out. So, I'll leave you now with this harrowing ending. Until we meet again, fellow readers...

Chapter 5: Chapter 5: Meeting the Menace

AN: Surprise! Bet you thought I wouldn't post the next couple of chapters for another week or so, didn't you? Well, I amaze myself sometimes.

Haradion: Pori was always going to be a smart character. I dropped a few little clues in throughout the series that she's not as stupid as she's making out to be... Looks like you figured it out, too.

anonymous13: In my opinion, this is the most personal series finale I've written yet. It's not as spectacular as the previous Series Three one, but this feels so much more emotional to write. You'll see why.

the-mysterious-other: Ah, Tara... what a lovely character. And to think she stemmed from an awful fan fiction...

Chapter Five: Meeting the Menace

Sarafina's revelation about the horrible things that Simba's parents had done hit him like a massive rock to the stomach. He could only gape at Sarafina—this heartbroken, inconsolable lioness—with shock in his eyes.

He couldn't believe it. For a long time, he'd known that his parents had become extremely reclusive. They just didn't respond to anything. Nothing at all. Only to themselves. There was obviously something going on between the two… Simba didn't know what it was, but it seemed that things were finally unravelling before his eyes.

And it was more atrocious than he could possibly imagine.

"Is this true?" Haiba asked, staring at Simba with an equally horrified expression in his eyes. Even he seemed disturbed by such an act.

"Of course it's true!" Sarafina snapped, still both furious and upset at the same time. Nala had never seen her so livid. "What, do you think I'm lying? *Is that it?*" She made a move to lunge at Haiba, claws poised for the kill, but Nala held her back. It took all of her strength, but she just about managed to restrain her almost maniacal mother.

"Mom—calm down!" Nala yelled, struggling as Sarafina tried to escape her grasp. "Fighting isn't going to solve anything!"

"There's nothing to solve!" Sarafina shot back, finally giving up on trying to attack Haiba. "We're dead." She lay on her back; it looked as though she had given up all hope. "We're dead…" She began to laugh at the top of her voice, startling the three cubs. "We're dead! Dead, dead, dead!"

They shared an uncertain glance over Sarafina's creepy laughter. "What are we going to do?" Haiba asked, concerned. "It's obvious that something's wrong."

"Could the pride really be… dead?" Nala asked uncertainly, afraid that her home might really be in ruins. "It's just not possible. *Is* it, Simba?"

Simba didn't answer. He just shuffled his paws awkwardly on the ground. While Sarafina was laughing madly to convey her sadness, Simba was silent. It looked as though his thoughts were trying to process all of the information he'd heard. The pride was dead. Who knows what else was in danger? The whole savannah? Maybe even the *world*?

"Simba?"

Nala's voice snapped him back into reality. "What?"

"What should we do?" she asked, concern evident in her eyes. Sarafina had finally stopped cackling, and it looked like she had slipped into unconsciousness. "If your parents are really… Well, you know…"

"I knew it," Simba replied, a noticeable frown on his face. "I knew there was something wrong with them. Right from the start. And we didn't do anything about it. We just let them do… whatever the heck it is they're up to."

"There wasn't really anything we *could* have done," Haiba argued. "They did nothing. At least, not until now."

"So what do we do about it?" Nala asked. "We have to stop them."

"There's nothing we *can* do," Simba sighed, sitting down on the ground. "They're far too strong."

"But we don't know if that's true," Haiba said. "Nala's mother could be—"

"Of course she's not lying," Simba interrupted. "Isn't it obvious? She's lost her mind. It's like she's been tortured or something. Didn't you hear her?"

"So why don't we go up there and find them?" Nala said, bravely stepping forward. "We can't let them hurt anyone else."

"What can we do?" Simba asked, looking like he'd given up already. "Huh? We're just… cubs. Weak cubs. We can't do anything…"

"Yes, we can," Nala insisted. "Don't say that, Simba. Look at all of the things we've done. All the lives we've saved. This is just like those times."

"This is my parents," Simba retorted. "What do you expect me to do? *Kill* them? This isn't Scar or Hago, Nala. They're the reason I'm here in the first place. I don't even know why they would do such an awful thing."

Nala stared at him. "Then go and find out."

Simba winced at the devastation splayed out before him. He stood to the side of the waterhole, just staring at this pile of misery and death. Lionesses and various other animals were lying everywhere, dead. Covered in blood. Some of their legs were broken, others had eyes missing… It was horrible.

He dipped his head, fighting back the urge to cry. *Mom and Dad… why would you do such a thing?*

It took him a while—considering that he had to step over several rotting corpses—but he finally made it to Pride Rock. Everything was dead silent. If someone was here, then they were very skilled at hiding.

But there wasn't anywhere else Simba's parents could be. It was very clear that this was where they were orchestrating their evil plan. This was where they were. He was sure of it.

He reached the entrance of the den, staring inside at the darkness. The afternoon sun hung lazily in the air, obscured slightly by white clouds. Shadows danced across the area. It was rather unsettling…

"Mom? Dad?" he called, taking a step towards the den. They were definitely in there. There was nowhere else left to hide…

"*The… son?*" said a distorted voice.

Simba whipped round—

—to face Mufasa and Sarabi.

Their eyes were black—the blackest Simba had ever seen. It was apparent to him that there was nothing less than pure evil flowing through their veins.

"Why'd you do it?" Simba was burning to ask the question. "Why did you kill everyone?"

"*Do you like our work, child?*" asked Sarabi. "*Isn't it wonderful?*"

"Work?" said Simba. How could this possibly—in any way—serve as work? It was nothing of the sort. It was just a sickening massacre. It made him want to vomit. "*Work*?"

"*Yes,*" said Mufasa. "*Work. Our work. We have been preparing for it. Day after day. Night after night. All leading up to this moment.*"

Simba still didn't understand. Their voices… It sounded as though there was someone completely different inside them. They weren't his parents. "Who are you? What have you done with my parents?"

It couldn't be them. It had to be someone—or something—else. Perhaps mind control or something of the sort. Or clones. Yes, that sounded right. This was clearly one of Shocker's schemes. His worst one yet. He would *kill* him for this…

"*Your parents are here, Simba,*" Mufasa said. "*We are your parents.*"

"No, you're not," Simba said, shaking his head. "You're *monsters*!"

The two looked at each other and chuckled. A loud, unpleasant noise.

"*How very wrong you are, child,*" said Sarabi. "*For it is* you *who are the monsters. The parasites of this world.*"

What are they talking *about?* Simba asked himself, confused. They were speaking as though they were from somewhere else. Somewhere far away…

"*You are the disease of this earth,*" said Mufasa, "*and we are the cure.*"

"Who are you?" Simba demanded, staring at them. Right into their black eyes. "*Who are you?*"

"*We are… the Vimelea,*" they said in unison.

Simba could only stare at them, rooted firmly to the spot. The Vimelea? Who were they? *What* were they? And more importantly, why had they slaughtered every single living thing in the kingdom?

"The—the Vimelea?" Simba spoke quietly. So his parents *were* being controlled. Through these… whatever they were. "What are they?"

"We *are the Vimelea,*" they spoke, again in unison. It was as if the two were one and the same. "*We came from across the stars—such a long way from this earth.*"

Simba was even more bemused. How could anyone travel across the stars? It didn't make sense at all. "What for?"

"*For this world,*" they replied. "*Our cousins—the Inque—have tried and failed before to enslave this puny planet. But we are stronger. We shall not fail in subjugating this earth and purging it from imperfection.*"

"How?" Simba asked.

"*Every being will die,*" they replied. "*Every single form of life will be removed in order to create the new world. The* perfect *world. A world filled with nothing but new Vimelea. To thrive and expand across existence. We are the supreme beings.*"

Simba tried to hide his shock and disgust from these Vimelea. Their plan was absolutely disgusting. To kill everyone who lived on the earth? That was a number that Simba couldn't even count.

"How are you doing this? How are you inside my parents?" He had so many questions on his mind for these… *things*. He just had to understand how they could do something so despicable.

"*We can invade the minds of all living creatures,*" they spoke. "*Take over their minds—their souls—and completely eliminate them.*"

"What?" Simba didn't fully understand. *Eliminate?* That just didn't sound right…

"*You see, we don't just take over the mind,*" they explained. "*We* become *the mind. Your parents… are gone.*"

"No…" The truth pierced the core of Simba's heart.

"*King Mufasa and Queen Sarabi have been dead for months,*" the Vimelea explained. "*What you see here are just mere shells of who they once were.*"

They were lying. They had to be.

"*Those insignificant, pathetic parents of yours are gone for ever. They'll never come back. Never.*" They began to laugh horribly; it echoed across the entirety of the Pride Lands it was so loud.

"No… No…" Simba backed away, his soul cracking in two. One of his worst fears had finally come true.

Mufasa and Sarabi were dead.

Tears welled up in Simba's eyes, and he began to cry underneath the sounds of the Vimelea laughing.

And they didn't care at all.

Chapter 6: Chapter 6: Nothing and No One

Chapter Six: Nothing and No One

Simba blacked out upon hearing the truth from the Vimelea. That his parents were dead. Stolen from these aliens just so they could purge the entire earth of life. He hated them more than he hated anyone before in his life. He was an orphan. Reduced to nothing. No one was going to take care of him now.

He woke up sobbing, crying in his sleep he was so sad. Clawing his way to a standing position, Simba discovered that he had been dumped to the side of the waterhole. He almost didn't even notice that there was the body of a dead cub lying next to him, blood dripping from the poor soul's throat. The Vimelea must have decided to dump him there. They didn't want to kill him yet; just extend his suffering for as long as possible.

Still crying, Simba stumbled away from Pride Rock in the distance. He just wanted to find Nala and Haiba—before he would end up doing something stupid like killing himself.

And far away, the Vimelea kept on laughing.

"Oh, no."

Shocker frowned, dumping Tama's body on the ground as he came face to face with Nala and Haiba. "I knew we should have taken that right turn at—"

"What the heck are you doing here?" Nala asked, her eyes burning with anger. "Did you have something to do with this?" She moved towards Shocker, and pushed him backwards at full force. "*Did you? Answer me!*"

"Nice push," remarked the Interceptor.

"I don't know what you're talking about!" Shocker yelled, pushing Nala onto her back.

"Oh, so the whole pride drops down *dead* and you two are just conveniently there?" Nala said sarcastically.

"Coincidence?" said Haiba. "I think not."

"We just want to leave!" Shocker told them. "I had nothing to do with the extinction of this pride! What, you think I have the power to kill everyone here? Do you think I even *want* to? No! I couldn't be bothered to destroy this place! I have much better things to do—like killing *you* instead!"

"I'd like to see you try," Nala snarled.

"Maybe we will," Shocker snapped, his paws sparking with electricity. "I haven't had a good shock in a while…"

"Look! Behind you!" Haiba said, pointing with a claw.

"Yeah, like I'd ever fall for that one," Shocker said.

Nala followed Haiba's gaze. "It's Simba."

Indeed it was. Simba—looking like he had just witnessed the ten most harrowing wars ever waged—was slowly walking towards them, head hanging low. He looked completely destroyed on the inside. As if someone had ripped his soul clean from his body.

"Look who's come here to join us," said the Interceptor, a smile on his face. "*I like it!*"

"Does he ever stop saying that?" Haiba grumbled.

Nala watched, astounded, as Simba slowly trudged up to her. He didn't even seem aware of Shocker and the Interceptor's presence. He then fell at her feet, crying softly.

She just watched him, not understanding what had gone on when he went to interrogate his parents. "Simba… what's wrong?"

He looked up at her, eyes red from extensive crying. "They're gone," he sobbed. "They're dead." He wrapped his forepaws around her legs, continuing to cry. "They killed them and they're dead…"

It didn't take Nala very long to put two and two together. Simba's parents were long gone. She should have seen it coming. After all, they acted nothing like they used to. They hadn't for months. Their appearance was clearly just a cover-up. She didn't understand what for, exactly. That would have to wait until Simba revealed all the details…

Nala hugged him softly, bringing him up. "Simba… what happened?" she asked.

He couldn't reply, and just buried his face in her fur. The tears never seemed to stop. It broke Nala's heart to see him in this way. The poor kid was torn up. No one his age should have to experience such a thing. Nala could sympathise in some way; after all, her father was a psychopathic monster.

"They're monsters…" Simba said, looking up at Nala with his saddened face. "Monsters… They want to kill us all."

Shocker watched Simba, his eyes half-closed. "So, what's new?" he shrugged.

Simba's eyes hardened, as he swiftly turned around to face him. His anger was uncontrollable and frightening as he jumped towards Shocker, lifting him off the ground with both forepaws and shoving him hard against a tree. He grunted in surprise.

"Don't you get it?" Simba yelled, shaking with fury as he strangled Shocker by the neck. "Everything I've ever cared about… is gone. Ruined. Dead." He spoke with a sense of truth in his voice that scared all of them. "I have never been more alone. I have… *nothing! No one! It's all gone!* Get it?" He looked away, tears flowing down his cheeks. "No… No…"

He collapsed to the ground. Shocker dropped from Simba's grasp with a *thump!* He backed away as Simba wept uncontrollably on the ground.

"Nice one, idiot," the Interceptor whispered.

Nala walked over to Simba, a placed a paw gently on his shoulder. She couldn't really do much else than be a comfortable presence. He was in an even worse state than her mother.

"Simba…" She trailed off, unsure of what to say.

"They're called the Vimelea," Simba finally said, all traces of emotion devoid from his voice. "They're from… far away. And they want to kill us all. The whole world. So they can make more Vimelea. Until it's just them. They… they took over my parents. Destroyed their souls. All that's left of them is the bodies. They're just shells." His voice broke, the sadness creeping in once more. "They're not ever coming back."

Haiba stepped forward, and spoke for the first time since Simba had arrived in his grieving state. "They loved you, Simba. You know that. They were proud."

"I know," Simba said, rising upwards. "And I'm going to make sure that they're avenged." He stared Haiba in the eyes. "I won't stop until both of those Vimelea are wiped off the face of the earth. Even if I have to kill them with my bare claws."

All was silent for a few moments. No one was sure of what to say.

"We'll help you," Nala offered. "If that's what you want."

"Yeah," Haiba said. "You can count on us."

Shocker and the Interceptor nodded at each other, and tried to extricate themselves from the scene.

"Where do you think you're going?"

The two turned around to face Simba and his dead eyes. "You're going to help me as well. Or I'll kill you, too."

Somehow, they didn't think that Simba was lying about that.

"Uh, yeah," said the Interceptor awkwardly. "I like it—and stuff."

Shocker shrugged. "Whatever."

Simba surveyed his friends—and his enemies—knowing that these were the only animals who could help. "Then here's the plan…"

"They're called the Vimelea," Pori explained, as she and Zazu hid underneath Pride Rock. "They're a kind of parasite.

They can take over the minds of anyone. Well, not exactly take over—it's like they *become* the creature itself. Like stealing their souls."

"So, err, how do you stop such… parasites?" Zazu asked, both nervous and curious. "I take it they are hard foes to overcome?"

Pori nodded. "You just have to kill the body they're in. It's like fighting any other opponent. It's just that… they have this immense strength. You'd have to tear it apart in order to stand any chance of destroying it. Then you have to burn the body—so none of the parasite inside can escape."

"Have you ever done this before?" Zazu questioned.

"No," Pori said, "but there's a first time for everything, right?"

"Yes," Zazu said, unsure. "Of course…"

AN: Yep. That's it. The Vimelea—a new villain—were inside Mufasa and Sarabi all along. Well, we can't exactly call them Mufasa and Sarabi anymore, can we? They're long since dead and gone. So, Shocker and the Interceptor have reluctantly teamed up with Simba, Nala and Haiba; Zazu and Pori are trying to kill the menace, too. How will this harrowing tale end? I know I'm going to sound like a psycho for saying this, but: *I like it!*

Chapter 7: Chapter 7: The End of Everything

AN: Well, here we are. After thirteen stories, ninety chapters and a lot of heartbreak, here we are. The end of Series Four. It's been an eventful, long journey, hasn't it? And as we know, all journeys have to end sometime. But enough of that for now. Enjoy the very last chapter.

Chapter Seven: The End of Everything

The Vimelea viewed the Pride Lands with smiles on their stolen faces. Soon it would all be destroyed. Reduced to rubble. And the whole world after that would soon follow. Each and every life would be destroyed until there was only room for a whole new race of Vimelea. A race that would thrive and prosper, before expanding to other worlds. Then the same process would repeat itself. Over and over and over until the Vimelea were the only race remaining. The *superior* race.

No one could stop them.

"*I believe the child has festered for long enough,*" the female Vimelea said, speaking through Sarabi's body. "*It is time to destroy him*."

"*I agree,*" said the male Vimelea. "*We've allowed him to live for this long—just to make him suffer—and now we will strike the final blow. The Pride Lands will be destroyed, and then the world*."

They looked at each other with dead black eyes, and began to laugh in their distorted voices.

"We just need to kill them."

Simba was explaining his plan to the unlikely group of allies that he had amassed: Nala, Haiba, Shocker, the Interceptor, and the recently awakened Tama. Suffice to say, she was more than surprised at where she had ended up.

"I'm lost here," Tama said, allowing a yawn to escape her throat. "What are we talking about?"

"An evil alien race has taken over the Pride Lands, killed everyone there, and now want to destroy the whole world," Simba said flatly.

Tama just stared at Simba, dumbfounded. "Oh…" she said slowly, feeling rather awkward. "Okay."

"So what do we do?" the Interceptor asked. "How do we kill them? I say we just jump right in, slit their throats, and dump them in the river. *I like it!*"

"That's the general idea," Simba agreed, much to the shock of Nala and Haiba. He caught their astonished glanced. "What? They deserve to die. They're gonna destroy anything and everything."

"It's just that…" Nala said, taking a few steps forward, "we don't really go out and *kill* other animals."

"But they're not animals," Simba countered. "They're pieces of filth that deserve to have their throats ripped out."

"Creepiness aside," Tama said, "I seriously doubt that you can destroy these super duper alien thingies just by ripping their throats out."

"They're not invincible," Simba said. "Just really strong. From what I could see, Nala's mom nearly killed them. My dad—I mean, that *thing*—had huge marks on his throat. We just need to find a weak point and hit it hard."

"But we'll never be able to get close enough," Haiba argued. "How are we supposed to get up to them before they throw us all the way to the moon?"

"Easy," said Simba, turning his head towards Shocker and the Interceptor. "*You* two are gonna be a distraction."

"*I like it!*" the Interceptor exclaimed.

"Wait, wait, wait," Shocker said, raising a paw and shaking his head. "Are you implying that you want us just to be bait for you?"

"Not entirely," said Simba. "I just want you to lead them away from Pride Rock. That is, if they don't come looking for us

already."

"And where are we supposed to lead them to?" Shocker questioned. "I seriously doubt they're going to follow us very far before they get bored."

Simba was silent for a few seconds.

"Follow me."

Simba, Nala, Haiba, Shocker, the Interceptor and Tama were stood at the edge of a cliff, overlooking a narrow canyon.

"Look," Simba said, indicating the gap between the canyon with a claw. "This is the perfect spot for the ambush. Shocker, I want you and the Interceptor to lead them right here." He gestured to two little cave openings on either side of the canyon. "Then you go and hide in those little caves over there. Nala and Haiba, I want you two to stand on the top of this cliff, and the one over there."

"What for?" Haiba asked.

"I want you to throw rocks at them," Simba said, confusing Nala and Haiba.

"*Rocks*?" Nala exclaimed. "What for?"

"It'll break their concentration," Simba explained. "Then I want Tama to jump in from behind and blast them with some of her magic. Then they'll be down on the ground, and I'll jump in to finish the job."

They all knew what he meant by the last part. Simba was going to slaughter those monsters who had murdered his parents and practically destroyed his entire home. He would make sure that they all suffered a painful death. They deserved nothing more than to die. And Simba was going to give them what they deserved.

"Everyone understand?" Simba asked.

Everyone nodded.

"Then let's get started."

The Vimelea stormed through the Pride Lands, ignoring the mass of death and destruction surrounding them. They only had one purpose firmly implanted in their alien brains: to slaughter Simba and destroy the royal family of the Pride Lands. Then there would be no further loose ends that needed to be tied up.

However, their journey was suddenly interrupted by an unusual voice.

"Hey, Vimelea!"

The two whipped round to face Zazu and Pori. It was the female who had called them. The Vimelea stared at each other, bemused. What on earth did they want? And how did they know their name?

"*The King's assistant?*" said the male Vimelea. "*How… interesting. I thought we got rid of you long ago?*"

"Well, I'm not as hard to get rid of as you think!" Zazu shot back. "I should have known something was up with you, you… ugly… *things*!" He glanced at Pori. "Please excuse my improper lexis. I'm just so angry that I've been misled by *them*."

"*You should have stayed away, little bird,*" the female Vimelea snarled. "*And then you just might have managed to live for a little while longer.*"

"I hardly intend to die today," Zazu said. "Or *any* day, for that matter."

"*You have no say in the natter,*" the male Vimelea said. "*You will die—and we shall live.*"

"I'd say it was the other way around, you creeps," Pori said, bravely staring up at the menacing creatures. Naturally, they towered over a small hornbill like her, but she wasn't deterred in the slightest. "If anyone's going to die today, then it's you."

"*Many have died before us,*" said the male Vimelea, indicating to the bodies littered across the ground, "*and many will follow. You cannot do anything to stop us. We are invincible.*"

"Oh, really?" challenged Pori. "Well, I just happen to know your weakness."

The Vimelea's eyes seemed to blink a blood red colour at Pori's response. "*You know of our weakness?*" they both said at once, looking livid.

"Of course I know your weakness," Pori said, looking particularly pleased with herself. "Any idiot who studies the Vimelea can figure it out. It's—"

Pori stopped midsentence when some sharp claws penetrated her stomach.

Zazu watched with horror as the male Vimelea impaled Pori, lifting her clean off her feet and throwing her across the ground. She tumbled and tossed around, before landing in a motionless heap.

The Vimelea smiled sadistically down at Zazu. "*Don't you see?*" they said, as one. "*You cannot stop the Vimelea. Our one weakness will die with your friend*."

They chuckled cruelly at him, before turning and walking away.

"Pori," Zazu gasped, before flying right over to her side.

Pori was dying. That much was certain. Blood was pouring profusely from a deep gash in her stomach where the male Vimelea's claws had struck. Her eyes were already half closed.

"Pori…" Zazu couldn't comprehend what he was seeing. The creatures had just struck her down without mercy. There was nothing anyone could do to help her. "I'm sorry."

Pori forced her eyes open, clearly fighting back against the pain. "Zazu," she said weakly. "You have to kill them."

"H-how?" Zazu stammered. "I don't know their—"

"Their weakness," Pori interrupted, "is the eyes. It's obvious." She coughed up blood. "The eyes are the only part of the body that changes. Take the eyes out. It'll… kill them."

"Pori…" Zazu held one of her limp wings in his. He trembled with fear for her. He didn't want her to die. They'd come so far. Just when he was starting to find out that she was completely different to the hornbill he thought she was. "I… I…"

"You can do it, Zazu," she said, sounding even frailer now. "I know you can. You're… braver than you… think."

"I love you…"

Pori stared at Zazu, stunned by what he had said.

Then she died.

"Pori? Pori?" Zazu called, but got no response. Her eyes were closed. She was gone. For ever. "No…"

Zazu winced, fighting back tears—

—and then screamed at the top of his voice.

The Vimelea were halted in their journey to find Simba again when two new figured jumped in front of them. They were stood before the opening of a narrow canyon.

"Hey, guys," said Shocker, smiling casually at them. "What's up?"

"Yeah," said the Interceptor. "Lovely weather we're having, huh?"

The Vimelea glared at the two, not amused in the slightest. These were two more lives that needed to be eliminated before the subjugation of the world could begin. The Pride Lands needed to be empty.

They nodded at each other, and began to charge at Shocker and the Interceptor.

Shocker frowned. "Run away," he said quickly.

The two did just that. They ran—as fast as they could—into the thinning canyon. Simba's plan was already in motion. They just had to make it to where Nala and Haiba were. Then the second part of the distraction could begin—before

Simba could finish things and close in for the kill.

"*You shall not escape,*" the female Vimelea said.

"*You are meaningless,*" said the male Vimelea. "*You will be destroyed.*"

Shocker and the Interceptor just ignored them. As they ran through the twisty, turning canyon, they knew that they were getting closer and closer to their goal. Then—hopefully—this nightmare would be over, and they could return to their decisively less threatening evil plans.

The two could finally see two figures in the distance. Nala and Haiba. Their part in the plan was almost over. Shocker and the Interceptor nodded at each other, as the cave openings on either side of the canyon came into view.

They darted into the openings, out of the sight of the Vimelea. This caused the two aliens to skid to a halt, confused at where they had disappeared to.

"Hey!"

They looked up to see Nala and Haiba stood on either side of the canyon cliffs, brandishing some heavy rocks.

Nala waved at them with a smile. "Hi."

And she hurled the rocks right at the Vimelea. Haiba did the same, throwing rock after rock at the two aliens.

The Vimelea growled with anger as they batted the rocks away with their paws. It appeared that the Pride Lands were not as empty as they first thought. Clearly there were more lives that needed to be destroyed.

Suddenly, a powerful bolt of energy struck the two Vimelea from behind, sending them crashing and bumping across the ground.

Tama lowered her forepaws from behind the evil aliens. "That should keep them stunned for a while," she said, satisfied that her magic had hit its intended target for once.

The Vimelea, smoking, battered and bruised, shuffled about on the ground. They felt as though they had lost all feeling in their legs.

And that gave Simba the edge that he needed.

From out of the cave opening where Shocker was hiding, Simba lunged for the male Vimelea—who was masquerading as his father—with an almighty cry that could shake the earth.

The male Vimelea grunted as Simba and he rolled across the ground. Simba managed to get on top of the male Vimelea and slash him again and again across the chest with his claws. He growled with a frightening intensity. "*I'm going to kill you!*" he roared.

Regaining the feeling in his legs, the male Vimelea grappled Simba by the throat, slamming him into the earth before he could do anything to react. "*I've had enough of you, child. It is time for you to die.*"

Simba said nothing, and leapt at him again, determined to end this once and for all. He collided with the male Vimelea, pressing his claws against its throat and beginning to choke him.

The female Vimelea stepped towards them.

"No!" the male snapped at her. "Let me finish this myself! *I* will kill the cub!"

Watching nervously, Tama, Shocker and the Interceptor began to scale one of the cliff walls. They preferred to spectate from a much safer position…

Simba and the male Vimelea continued to fight from below. Simba didn't care that it looked like his father. He had removed all connections between these aliens and them long ago. All that mattered was killing the two of them.

The male Vimelea struggled against Simba as it choked him, but it was having trouble pushing the cub away.

"*Die*…" Simba snarled, his eyes glazing over with hatred for this slaughtering monster. "*Die*…"

The male Vimelea retaliated by grabbing Simba by the midriff, and pinning him down to the ground. It began to choke

Simba, just like the cub had done with him. "*You have lost, cub. No one can stop the Vimelea. We are always and forever.*"

Helpless to do anything, Simba choked and gasped for breath. But the Vimelea had regained its incredible strength now, and was using its full force in an attempt to end Simba's life once and for all.

The male Vimelea began to laugh. "*You will die,*" he said. "*Just as your pathetic parents dead. You are nothing to us.* Nothing!"

Tears began to stream down Simba's cheeks as he realised that the situation was hopeless. He was going to die, with his parents ashamed of him because he hadn't avenged them. He was a useless son.

As the light began to fade from Simba's vision, and he began to lose the will to keep on going, a faint voice sounded from what seemed like miles away.

"The eyes…" it called. The voice sounded oddly like Zazu. "Simba… the *eyes*!"

Wait a second… it *was* Zazu!

Simba's eyes snapped open, and he turned his head to see Zazu hovering in the air above him.

"Zazu?" he choked in a voice that sounded nothing like his.

"Its weakness is the eyes," he explained. "You have to remove them."

Simba looked up at the Vimelea, and lashed out with his claws at its eyes. He dug his claws deep into them, snarling with rage as he began to try and rip them right out from their sockets.

The male Vimelea howled in pain as he released its grip on Simba's throat. He staggered back, bleeding heavily from the eyes at Simba's attack.

Collapsing onto its back, blood pouring into its vision, the male Vimelea managed one last look at the female.

"Do it…" he choked at her. "Begin the… subjugation."

The female Vimelea nodded, and opened her jaws as wide as she possibly could.

Nala, Haiba, Shocker, the Interceptor and Tama watched with horror as a deafening piercing sound emanated from the female Vimelea's mouth.

And then she began to breathe lava.

"*Whoa!*" everyone cried, as the female Vimelea began to expunge a torrent of lava from her mouth. It didn't take long for the inordinate amount to spew throughout the canyon, filling it up at an amazing speed.

Simba watched in shock at the female Vimelea as she spouted out the endless supply of lava, which was coursing right towards him. He sprinted for the cliff wall where Nala and the other were gathered, scaling up it as fast as he could.

Nala held out a paw. "Simba!"

He jumped for Nala, and she caught him just as the lava filled up the entire canyon. The female Vimelea was gone, eradicated by her own actions. It was as though she had committed suicide…

"Are you okay?" Nala asked, staring at the battered and bruised form of Simba.

He looked up. "Zazu," he said, searching for the hornbill. "Where is he?"

"Present, young master," Zazu replied, fluttering down in front of Simba. He looked incredibly miserable.

"Zazu," Simba said, surprised. "How did you know—?"

"Someone I have a very high amount of respect for told me how," he interrupted, making his point very brief. He didn't wish to think about Pori—and her death, for that matter—any more. It was all in the past now… "At least now those horrible creatures are gone for ever."

"And so will we if we don't get out of here!" Haiba exclaimed, watching as deadly columns of lava began to shoot up from

the ground. As far as anyone could see, the entirety of the Pride Lands had been engulfed in the boiling liquid. Only a few scant cliffs and tall rock structures remained. They all watched as Pride Rock in the distance crumbled to nothingness, swallowed up by the lava.

The kingdom was dead.

"Where are we going?" Nala asked.

"Who cares? Anywhere as long as we don't fry!" Haiba replied, making a run for it. "Come on!"

Simba, Nala and Tama ran in Haiba's direction across the cliff top. Zazu flew after them.

"I think I'm with them," said the Interceptor, before hurrying in their wake.

"Don't think you're leaving without me!" Shocker exclaimed, before chasing after him.

But then, the ground Shocker was stood on gave way, and he found himself dangling from the edge by a single paw, just above the searing lava. "*No!*"

The Interceptor turned round to see Shocker's predicament. He was struggling to keep a hold on the edge of the cliff. "Help me!" he cried desperately at the Interceptor.

The Interceptor stepped slowly towards him. "I thought you were immortal," he said.

"Not in lava, you idiot!" he snapped. "There'll be nothing left of me!"

Upon hearing that, a cruel smile spread across the Interceptor's face.

"Now, there's a thought."

Shocker realised that the Interceptor wasn't going to be of any help, and his mouth dropped open in horror.

"No… please…"

The Interceptor let out one of his trademark eagle-like screeches, and dug his claws into the paw Shocker was holding on to the cliff with.

Shocker instantly lost his grip, and tumbled away into the lava below. He didn't even have a chance to scream before it ate him whole.

"*I like it!*" the Interceptor roared, before laughing maniacally as he followed after the cubs.

Simba, Nala, Haiba, Tama, Zazu and the Interceptor just about made it to the outskirts of the Pride Lands. Well, you couldn't exactly call them the Pride Lands anymore. Everything had been reduced to nothingness.

They jumped onto the ground just as the last part of the Pride Lands finally sank away into the ground. The six of them watched as the kingdom disappeared for ever. All that was left was a gaping hole in the earth about ten miles long and ten miles wide. Below was just darkness.

There was nothing left of the kingdom that had thrived for hundreds and hundreds of years. It was all gone now.

Ignoring the fact that *just* enough lava had been used to destroy the exact area of the Pride Lands, Simba and the others watched with shock.

"It's all gone," Haiba said. "All of it…"

The Interceptor chuckled. *And Shocker, too,* he thought gleefully.

"Tojo's gonna freak when he hears about this," Tama whispered to herself, unable to comprehend the destruction.

"I don't believe it," Nala said. A sudden thought occurred to her. "Wait… what about—?"

"Nala?"

Nala breathed a sigh of relief at the sound of her mother's voice. She turned around. "Mom?"

Sarafina stepped towards her daughter, placing a paw around her shoulder. "I'm here, Nala. It's all right."

"But our home," Nala said. "It's all gone."

Simba had been quiet for a long time now. "Then we'll find another home," he said optimistically. Everyone was surprised to see the trace of a smile on his face. "We have a whole world around us, remember?"

"But Simba—" Nala began.

"But nothing, Nala," Simba cut her off. "We can do anything if we try hard enough."

"What about those… whatever they were?" Haiba asked.

"They're gone," Simba said. "And that's good enough for me."

"Hey, Simba," said the Interceptor.

Simba turned to face him. "What?"

The Interceptor held out a paw. "Good work."

Slightly taken aback, Simba shook him by the paw. "Uh… thanks, I guess."

The Interceptor smiled. "*I like it!*"

"Wait, where's Shocker?" Simba suddenly asked, looking around for a sign of him.

"Oh, he had to dash off," the Interceptor lied, before turning to leave himself. "I'm sure you'll be seeing me again, though. *Very* soon." He let out another horrible screech, and sprinted off.

"Yeah," Simba said. "I suppose we'll have to find somewhere temporary to stay. All of us." He smiled at Zazu, who managed a weak smile back.

"You guys can always stay with me," Tama offered. "If you want."

"That's very kind of you," Sarafina said, knowing that she herself was going to have to stay with them too.

"Yes," Simba said. "We'll stay with you and Tojo while we get ourselves together."

"But then what, Simba?" Haiba asked. "What are we going to do after that?"

But Simba—as he stared at the empty void where his home once was—had no answer to his question.

He just didn't know.

The End

AN: And that's it. Series Four of *The Lion King Adventures*—as I've now affectionately named it—is over. Thank you to everyone who read, reviewed, favourite and supported me through all these thirteen stories. It took me quite a while this time, but I finally managed it. Don't I always?

Of course, now you can leave me a super duper mega review telling me everything you thought about every single word I've ever written. Or a "nice job" will do just fine. I'm good either way.

Now, you probably still have some questions left over after this story. There's been a little bit of speculation over the last few stories concerning whether I'm going to finally end the series or not.

And the answer is yes.

But not yet. I will be doing a Series Five before finally saying goodbye to Simba, Nala and Haiba. As for *why* I'm ending it, it's because I feel that the story of these characters is finally coming to a close. To me, it's right to end this at Series Five—before everything gets too stale and I run out of ideas or something horrible like that.

So, there you have it. Thirteen more stories before the end is nigh. I hope you enjoyed Series Four, and I very much look forward to entertaining you throughout the upcoming Series Five.

Thanks very much,

—ThatPersonYouMightKnow

COMING SOON: Simba and his friends embark on an incredible journey...